

Testimony of Renewable Energy New England, Inc. before the
Energy and Technology Committee on proposed
House Bill 6249 *An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind Projects Until the
Adoption of Regulations*
Thursday, February 3, 2011

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Senator Witkos, Representative Hoydick and members of the Energy and Technology Committee, my name is Francis Pullaro and I'm here on behalf of RENEW as its Executive Director to testify in opposition to proposed House Bill 6249 *An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind Projects Until the Adoption of Regulations*.

RENEW is a partnership between the renewable energy industry and environmental public interest groups in New England whose mission involves promoting clean, renewable and environmentally responsible technologies for the region that will increase energy diversity, spur economic development, and improve environmental quality. RENEW's membership is comprised of the American Wind Energy Association, Conservation Law Foundation, First Wind, Horizon Wind Energy, Iberdrola Renewables, Union of Concerned Scientists and Vestas Americas.

Wind and other forms of clean renewable energy have been encouraged by the legislature for more than a decade. The General Assembly adopted the Renewable Portfolio Standard as part of Public Act 98-28 to require electric companies and competitive suppliers to procure increasing amounts of their power from renewable and other clean energy resources. Just last year the legislature's vetoed energy bill would have required the Connecticut utilities to file contracts with the DPUC for various renewable energy projects including 25 MW of capacity from wind resources. Public financial support through the Clean Energy Fund has been beneficial for supporting the first wind energy resource projects in the state.

RENEW's membership is concerned that a moratorium on wind energy projects could delay development of clean renewable energy in the state by at least several years. We need to consider not just the impacts of the location, construction and operation of renewable energy facilities, but also the public health disadvantages should we fail to deploy new clean energy infrastructure and leave ourselves dependent on dangerous and polluting electric generation sources including the region's fleet of old coal plants.

Connecticut must nurture its budding renewables industry if it is to meet its laudable goal of attaining 27 percent of its energy from renewable resources by the year 2020 particularly with the requirement that a minimum of 20 percent derive from Class I renewable energy sources such as wind. Connecticut needs to maintain its hospitable climate for renewable energy developers. A moratorium will push wind developers into its neighboring states which all favor wind development. This result will be counterproductive to Connecticut's energy and economic development policy goals.

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RENEW recognizes that appropriate energy facility siting standards are equally as important to protecting our environment and for our general health. We will always face the challenge of harmonizing the public benefits of increasing our use of renewable energy sources and protecting other environmental values. Last year, the environmental and developer community supported legislation in Massachusetts that would have created a process to fast track the permitting of community scale on-shore wind projects in part because it included reasonable environmental and siting standards. The bill did not, however, impose a moratorium on permitting projects under the traditional process until such time as standards became law.

In evaluating this legislation RENEW hopes that the committee will consider the entire state and even region, not just an individual site, to strike the right balance between development and the environment. We must recognize that wind power is not an ordinary type of development, but a source of energy with enormous environmental benefits.

In summary, RENEW believes that (1) Connecticut has an immediate need for responsible wind energy development, in addition to conservation, efficiency and other renewable energy technologies; (2) we must ensure that wind projects compete with polluting fossil fuel projects on a level playing field; (3) all energy projects have impacts and we need standards that will avoid or mitigate those impacts; and (4) responsibly sited wind energy projects at the community level are vital to achieving the State's environmental and economic development goals.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide these preliminary comments. RENEW hopes that the parties with vested interests can come together to strike the right balance over standards for the siting clean wind energy. Our environment depends on it.

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